

RFP 11-13 Answers to Vendor Questions

Five groups of questions were submitted with some overlap among them. In order to answer these efficiently, the questions have been ordered in one list and grouped into sections by vendor. When a question is asked that has been answered to some degree earlier in the list of questions, reference will be made to the earlier answer.

Section I

1. On page 4 of the RFP IDOA states “each Respondent must submit one original hard-copy (marked “Original”) and one original CD-ROM (marked “Original”) and 2 complete copies of the proposal on CD-ROM, including the Transmittal Letter and other related documentation as required in this RFP.” Does this mean that vendors must submit a total of three (3) CD-ROMs?

Answer: Yes.

Should the “Original” CD-ROM contain different materials than the “Copy” CD-ROMs? Or should all three CD-ROMs contain the same material?

Answer: The CD’s should contain the same material.

2. On page 10 IDOE indicates an intention to award the contract on or around October 15th. When does the state expect that online professional development content will be made available to in-state users (“go live”)?

Answer: Given the contractual process that follows the announcement of the RFP winner the time frame for content being available to Indiana teachers is December or January.

3. We understand that IDOE has implemented End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs) including the Algebra II ECA from the American Diploma Project. Does the state consider it highly desirable that online professional development content include specific Algebra II professional development resources that are aligned with ADP ECA in the areas of Linear Functions, Transformations of Linear Functions, Linear Equations, Systems of Linear Equations, Quadratic Functions, Transformations of Quadratic Functions, Quadratic Equations, and Data Analysis?

Answer: At this time the state is not narrowing the focus of the online PD efforts to one area or another. The state desires a system that has content appropriate for many purposes and on many topics that would support more effective classroom instruction. However, the state also anticipates that vendors may have varying levels of focus in the content that has already been produced. Improved mathematics instruction is a critical component of the state’s goals and excellent PD in the area of mathematics would likely be a plus.

4. Does IDOE desire that the online professional development resources include research-based professional development for early childhood educators at the Pre-K level?

Answer: This would not be the primary focus of the state's professional development efforts but a strong collection of content in this area could benefit the state. The state is making an effort to establish a foundational online PD offering that can be augmented and improved over time. The state anticipates that the initial offering may be strong in some areas and have less coverage in others. See answer to question 3 as well.

5. Does IDOE require that vendors offer a complete online learning experience that includes online classroom videos, research journal articles, videos of researcher commentary, and artifacts of the classroom such as sample student work and teacher lesson plans?

Answer: The state has not defined particular content components (other than video on demand) that must be part of the initial offering of the modules or units of PD that are part of the system. Factors that will weigh in the overall consideration of quality of the content and platform will include the sufficiency of the PD experience—whether or not it can stand on its own or needs lots of additional context to be turned into effective PD. However, just as important as the PD inputs will be the capabilities of the system to track usage, participation, and teacher learning.

6. Is there a specific desired percentage for M/WBE business participation?

Answer: Sections 1.20 and 1.21 detail the MWBE participation goals.

7. How will IDOE decide which 6,000 teachers participate in this project? Will IDOE select specific schools or districts to participate? Or concentrate on particular grade levels or subject area?

Answer: The state will not be focusing on particular grade levels or subject areas as a criteria for participation. The largest factor in the selection process will be a willing and supportive local administration that sees the value and promise of online PD.

8. On page 17 it states that vendors are required to "Indicat[e]...the scope and timeline for professional development related to the implementation of the Common Core standards." What is the state's plan for implementing the Common Core Standards? When does the state plan on implementing them? Will they be phased in (i.e. ELA first, then Math)? Please provide more information about what PD IDOE is looking for related to the Common Core Standards.

Answer: For a video summary answer to the question of how Indiana will implement the Common Core go to: <http://media.doe.in.gov/curriculum/2010-08-03-CommonCore.html>. Relative to the online PD system that state is seeking to procure, it is important that the vendor responses make clear what if any attention their offering pays to the Common Core. Has content been aligned to the Common Core? Is there any professional development that introduces the Common Core standards to classroom teachers? Is there any effort to systematically link teacher practice to

effective instruction on the content of the Common Core? Indiana views the adoption of the Common Core as an opportunity to go beyond broadcasting a list of standards to actually providing targeted PD that will support the effective delivery of instruction.

9. IDOE states that the budget for this project is \$200,000. What is the source of these funds?

Answer: Not relevant to the procurement process.

Section II

10. My expertise lies in teaching a language arts program, mostly to K-3 students. Is the intent of this proposal to select just one vendor who can provide all of the K-12 professional development segments; or will you be selecting several vendors who may have expertise in other subject areas at different levels of instruction?

Answer: The state is interested in the quality of the overall PD offering. If the content comes from various sources, it should have a common interface and packaging. So, it is possible that a consortium of vendors could respond to this proposal. However, the state would require a single point of contact and would take no responsibility of aggregating resources from various vendors as part of this procurement effort.

Section III

11. In order to monitor student achievement, will there be access to student achievement data and classroom walkthrough data that indicates teacher implementation of new learning?

Answer: No.

12. If there is facilitation required for coursework or assessment of coursework is there funding provided for this?

Answer: This procurement effort is focused on asynchronous delivery of content that is high quality and that could serve as an excellent source of building wide professional development on a targeted topic or as a source of PD for individuals working on re-licensure. The state can imagine that the platform for this PD could be flexible enough to support credit bearing courses or that a school may want to arrange a facilitated PD experience using portions of the content available in the system as key inputs for the overall PD effort. The funds dedicated to this procurement effort are to support the acquisition of a platform and access to content—not for actual PD facilitation.

Section IV

13. In reference to 2.4.2.7, Please explain in more detail the type of analytics and tracking desired for teacher usage of the tool. Are there existing reports that we can see a sample of?

Answer: While the state has no specific examples of the reports that are desired, the state desires analytics and data that track educator interaction with the content including some assessment of learning. The state can imagine that this learning could be captured in a variety of ways.

14. In reference to 2.4.2.10, please explain in more detail about the "existing content repository of the IDOE".

Answer: The IDOE has a system called the Learning Connection (<http://learningconnection.doe.in.gov>). This system provides student data, digital content, and a collaboration platform for teachers. Ideally, the content available through the PD system could be found through the Learning Connection and accessed by teachers using their Learning Connection login.

15. In reference to 2.4.2.10, please explain in more detail about the need to share login credentials with the state portal. Is the technology organization in charge of the state portal aware of this need?

Answer: See answer to question 14. The Learning Connection is maintained by the IDOE and the team is aware of this need.

16. In reference to 2.4.2.11, please explain in more detail about "implementation of the Common Core standards".

Answer: See answer to question 8.

17. In reference to 2.4.2.14, is there an existing system that tracks student learning outcomes? Do you envision this new website tool to allow teachers/administration to create new student learning outcomes? What is your desired outcome to relate PD to student learning outcomes?

Answer: The state provides a variety of tools to help schools measure student learning. These tools produce data that is accessible to schools and that is available to classroom teachers through the Learning Connection. The state's initial vision for the provision of PD and the tracking of outcomes is primarily on the instructional side of the equation. However, the state would expect that over time, the PD provider would have the capacity to work with the state to produce or secure PD content that addresses particular areas of need as represented by student performance data.

18. In reference to 2.4.3.2, do you have a preferred hosting model?

Answer: The state does not want to host the content on its servers.

19. Can you please provide examples of what is meant by “nationally recognized content” (such as citations to specific resources, publishers, etc)?

Answer: Nationally recognized content could be defined as content that is coming from nationally recognized providers—leaders in the educational community. Nationally recognized content has a reputation for quality and effectiveness that goes beyond isolated pockets of endorsement and use.

20. Are the fees that would be needed to license / purchase this “nationally recognized content” part of the baseline budget?

Answer: Yes.

21. Is it IDOE's intention to have the ability to integrate IDOE content with the content provided by the “nationally recognized content” (that is collected by the vendor), or do you mean just to make it available within the portal? For example, do you need a solution that allows you to access / manipulate the underlying source files that may have been used to create any new content or interactive training created under this contract, or to just add it to the same training portal?

Answer: The state is looking for a platform and an initial content collection. Additions to the content collection would not require manipulation of the source code but rather the ability to point the system to other content sources or load additional content directly into the system. The state would expect that uploading additional content would include the ability to organize it and describe it in the system.

22. When you mention the creation of training videos, do you literally mean videos, or would they also be open to other interactive training formats such as those produced by an off the shelf software tool?

Answer: The state is looking for engaging and high quality content and is open to various media used in combination. See answers to questions 3, 4, and 5.

23. What is currently being used to accomplish these tasks? (i.e., a particular software program, a custom developed system, etc.)

Answer: The state does not currently use a particular software program and does not systematically deliver online professional development to teachers.

24. Is there a current incumbent? If so, has the service with the incumbent been satisfactory? What needs are not currently being met by that current solution / vendor that is driving the publication of this RFP?

Answer: The state has no existing contract (see answer to question 23). The need for increasing instructional quality, the importance of maximizing instructional time, and the need for high quality and cost effective PD is driving this RFP publication.

25. Must the vendor / vendor team possess any specific certifications for designing / data collection of the PD tool?

Answer: No.

Section V

26. 2.4.2.6, page 17 – Will IDOE consider other deployment technologies, such as web-based professional development/training modules, beyond video-based modules? Does IDOE have a rough estimate of how much specialized curriculum might be required?

Answer: The state is looking for engaging and high quality content and is open to various media used in combination. See answers to questions 3, 4, and 5.

27. 2.4.2.10, page 17 – What is IDOE's existing content repository? Is IDOE asking for a data export from the vendor's LMS?

Answer: The IDOE is not asking for an export of a vendor LMS. The expectation is that the content will be hosted. If it is possible, the IDOE would be interested in the addition of content metadata to its content repository so that search interfaces in the IDOE's Learning Connection system could find PD artifacts/modules. See answer to question 14.

28. 2.4.3.5, page 18 – Does this IDOE database currently exist? If so, what is it?

Answer: The Learning Connection has MS SQL server as its database.

29. 2.4.3.6, page 18 – Does the IDOE's system allow for LDAP?

Answer: No.

30. 2.4.3.15, page 19 – What kind of training does IDOE suggest? We assume there would be training for IDEO super users as well as training for teachers. Is this correct? How many IDOE users would need to be trained on the system?

Answer: The state is looking for very minimal training on the PD system. This is due to the fact that the online PD system should be easy to use and the state's interest in securing access to a collection of PD system with excellent content with the available funds. The state expects limited if any \$\$ to be dedicated to training on the system.